Catalogue no. 98-312-X2011003

Census in Brief

Living arrangements of seniors

Families, households and marital status
Structural type of dwelling and collectives,
2011 Census of Population

Statistics Canada Statistique Canada

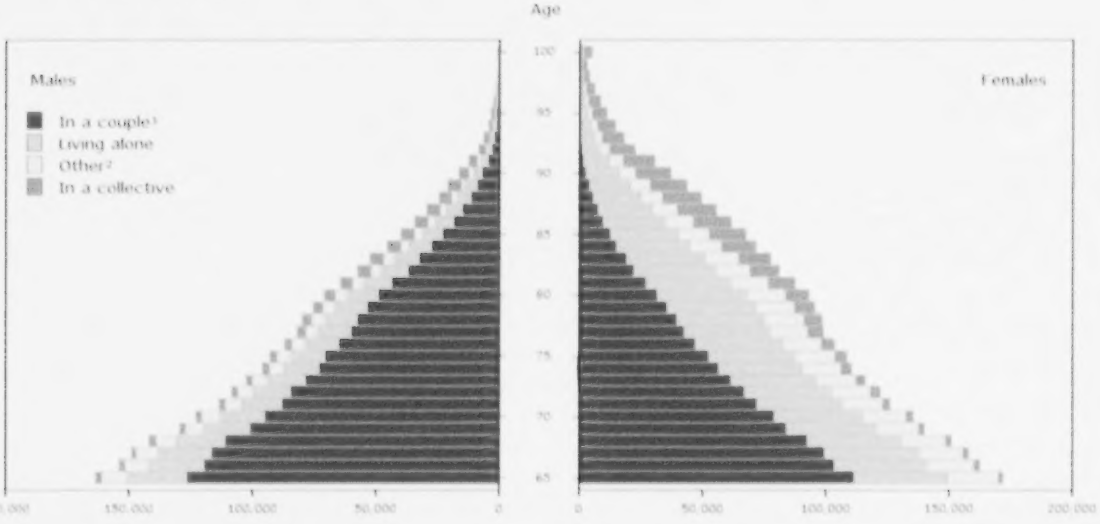
Canada

Introduction

The 2011 Census of Population counted nearly 5 million (4,945,000) seniors aged 65 and over in Canada. Of these individuals, 92.1% lived in private households or dwellings (as part of couples, alone or with others) while 7.9% lived in collective dwellings, such as residences for senior citizens or health care and related facilities.[1] These proportions were relatively unchanged from 2001 when 92.6% of the senior population lived in private households and 7.4% lived in collective dwellings.

Most people aged 65 and over lived in a couple with either a married spouse or a common-law partner during their early senior years (Figure 1).[2] The size of the population of older seniors was smaller, owing to higher mortality rates. At the oldest ages, fewer people lived in private households, specifically in couples, and comparatively more lived in collective dwellings, especially women.

Figure 1 Population pyramid by living arrangement and sex for the population aged 65 and over, Canada, 2011



Notes:
1. Refers to married spouses and common-law partners.
2. 'Other' includes seniors who are lone parents, living with other relatives or non-relatives, or adult children living with their parent(s).

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2011.

1. Includes all individuals in private or collective dwellings in Canada. Persons outside Canada on government, military or diplomatic postings are not included. Persons in private occupied dwellings refer to a person or a group of persons who occupy the same dwelling and do not have a usual place of residence elsewhere in Canada. The population in private occupied dwellings is the same as the population in private households. Persons in collective dwellings refer to the population in a dwelling of a commercial, institutional or communal nature, such as nursing homes or hospitals. For more information on private and collective dwellings, see the *2011 Census Dictionary*, Catalogue no. 98-301-X.
2. With the exception of the section on residences for senior citizens, analysis of seniors living in couples, alone or with others in this Census in Brief refers to the population in private households. The proportions of seniors in these living arrangements however, are presented as a share of the combined senior population in private households and collectives.

Living in a couple the most common arrangement for seniors

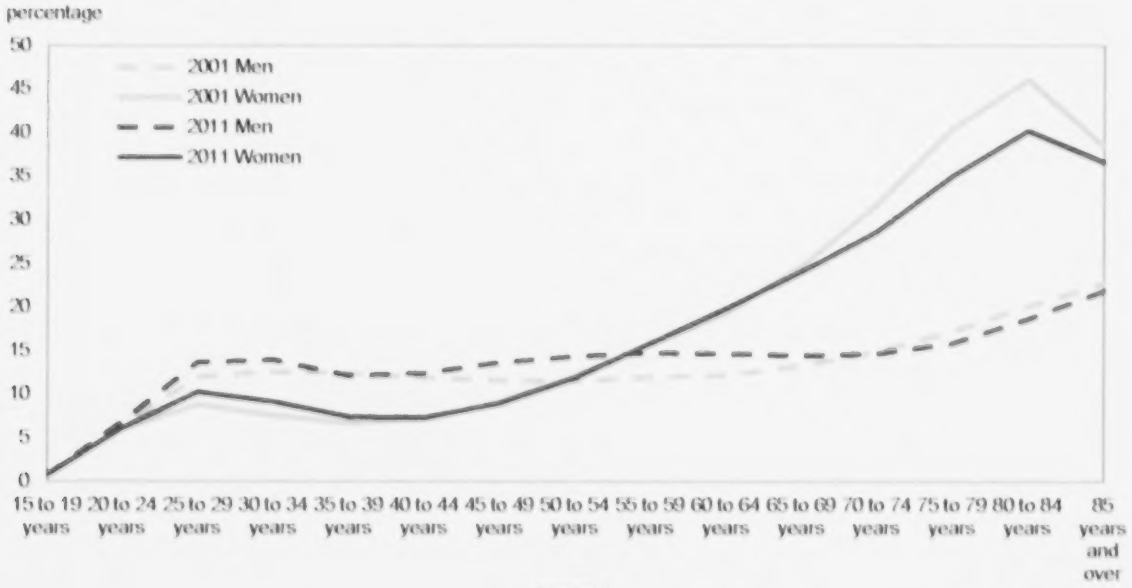
Among the population aged 65 and over, the majority (56.4%) lived as part of a couple in 2011; a higher proportion than a decade earlier in 2001 (54.1%). More than 7 in 10 senior men (72.1%) and over 4 in 10 senior women (43.8%) lived in a couple in 2011.

The prevalence of living in a couple declined with age. Among seniors aged 65 to 69, 70.0% lived as part of a couple in 2011, although this was higher for men (77.9%) than for women (62.7%). For the oldest age group, aged 85 and over, fewer seniors were in couples. Still, more than one-fifth (21.9%) of this age group lived with a married spouse or common-law partner: 46.2% of men and 10.4% of women.

Decreasing share of senior women living alone

2011 Census data showed that about one-quarter (24.6%) of the population aged 65 and over lived alone, down from 2001 (26.7%). The share of the population that lived alone was fairly low and stable until about the age of 50 for women, and until approximately age 70 for men (Figure 2). After these ages, the prevalence of living alone increased for both sexes, but more sharply for women.

Figure 2 Percentage of the population aged 15 and over living alone by age group, Canada, 2001 and 2011[1]



Note:
1 Living alone refers to the population in private households while the denominator is the combined population in private households and collectives.

Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001 and 2011.

At younger ages, living alone was more common for men than for women. However, among seniors aged 65 and over in 2011, women were nearly twice as likely to do so—31.5% compared to 16.0% of men.

This relates in part to the lower life expectancy of males, compared to females, and to the tendency for women to form unions with spouses or partners who are slightly older than themselves. As a result, senior women were more likely than senior men to be widowed, many of whom subsequently lived alone.[3]

Between 2001 and 2011, the proportion of senior women who lived alone declined while the proportion of senior men living alone remained relatively stable. The largest decrease in the share of women who lived alone occurred among women aged 80 to 84. In 2011, 40.2% of women in this age group lived alone, down from 46.1% in 2001. The proportion for men in this age group fell from 20.1% in 2001 to 18.6% in 2011.

The larger decline among senior women may have been partly due to the fact that life expectancy for men has increased at a faster rate than for women in recent years. Consequently, proportionally more senior women remained in couples until older ages.

Among the age group 85 and over, 36.6% of women lived alone in 2011 compared to 21.8% of men. Within this age group, living arrangements differed for those in their nineties compared to those who were centenarians (see Box 1).

Box 1 Living arrangements of people in their nineties and centenarians

Among seniors in their nineties, over half (56.5%) lived in private households in 2011, including 28.7% who lived alone, 12.2% who were part of couples and 15.7% who lived with others, such as adult children. The remaining 43.5% lived in collectives such as nursing homes or residences for senior citizens.

Men and women differed in the prevalence of particular living arrangements in their nineties. Overall, the share of women in this age group who lived in collective dwellings (47.3%) in 2011 was higher than for men at this age (33.3%). Women in their nineties were also more likely to live alone (31.1%) than men (22.2%) or to live with others (17.3% for women compared to 11.2% for men). In contrast, men in their nineties were more likely to be living in a couple (33.2%) than were women in the same age group (4.3%).

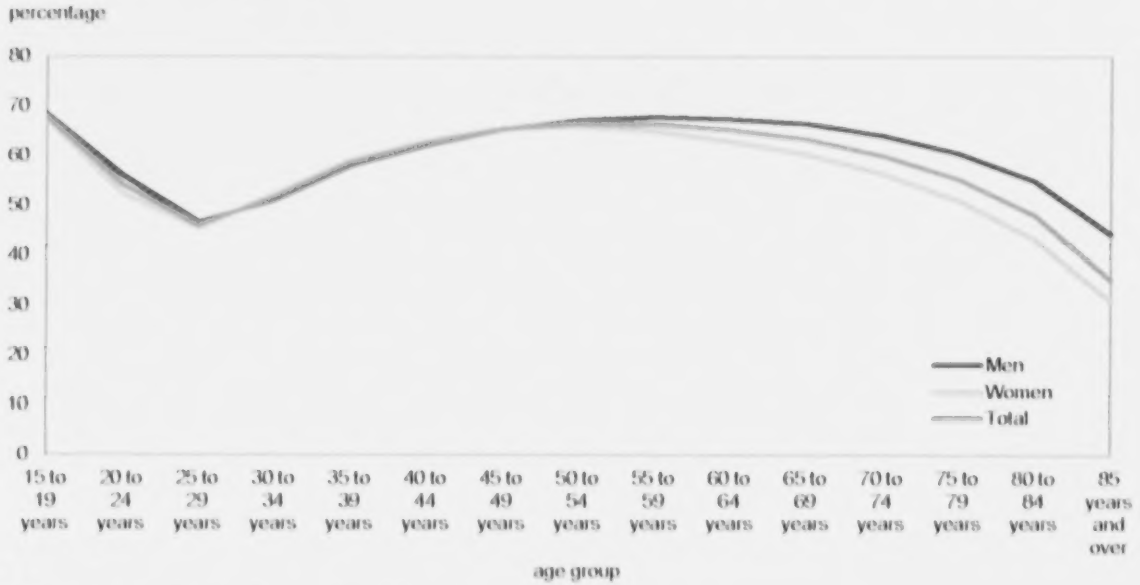
Among centenarians—people aged 100 and over—about one-third (34.0%) lived in private households in 2011 while two-thirds (66.1%) lived in collective dwellings. For men aged 100 and over, close to half (47.6%) lived in private households as did 31.2% of women in this age group. More than 1 in 10 centenarian men (11.5%) lived as part of a couple, while this was the case for less than 1 in 100 centenarian women (0.7%).

3. More women aged 65 and over also lived with others including their own parents, their adult children, or other relatives or non-relatives, compared to men. Overall, 11.0% of seniors lived with others in 2011, 14.6% of women and 6.6% of men.

Proportion of seniors living in a single-detached house declines with age

Census data show that the share of the population living in a single-detached house varies as individuals age (Figure 3). Among younger age groups, the proportion of men and women who lived in a single-detached house was similar. The prevalence of living in this type of housing[4] declined for both sexes once individuals reached the age of 55. The decrease was more pronounced for women.

Figure 3 Percentage of the population aged 15 and over living in a single-detached house by age group, Canada, 2011



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2011.

The differences between women and men were more apparent in the oldest age group. In 2011, 66.5% of men aged 65 to 69 lived in a single-detached house, compared with 60.4% of women. However, among seniors aged 85 and over, 44.3% of men lived in a single-detached house, compared with 30.9% for women.

The share of seniors living in collective dwellings increased with age. The 2011 Census counted 393,095 seniors aged 65 and over, or 7.9% of all seniors, living in a collective dwelling. Among seniors aged 65 to 69, 1.6% lived in a collective dwelling as compared to a proportion of 31.1% for seniors aged 85 and over.

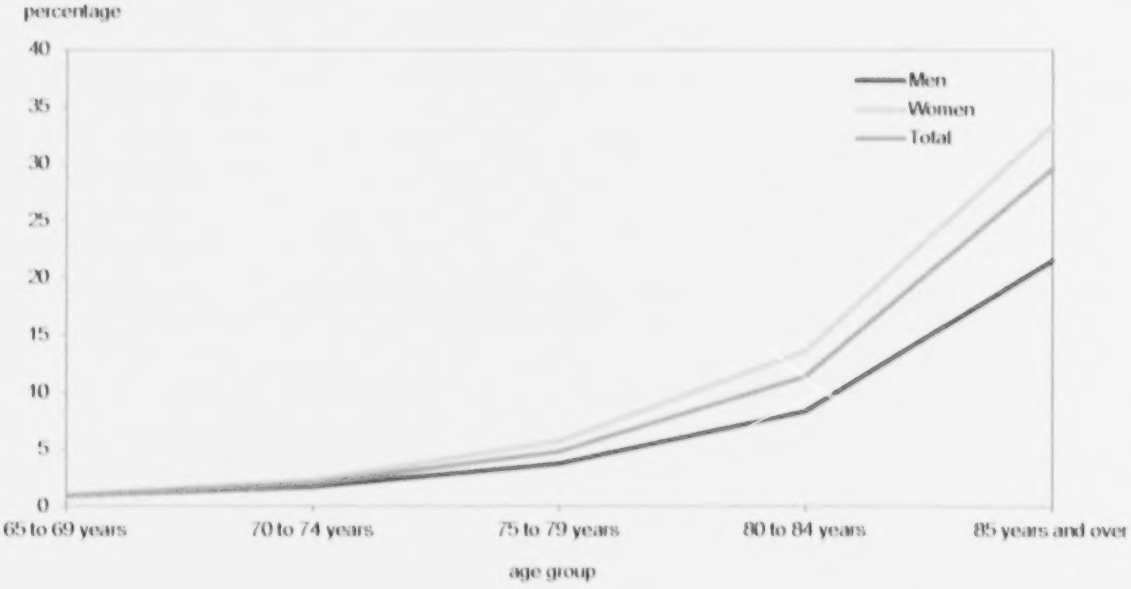
4. Other types of housing includes private dwellings such as semi-detached house, row house, apartment or flat in a duplex, apartment in a building that has five of more storeys, apartment in a building that has fewer than five storeys, other single-attached house, mobile homes and other movable dwellings such as houseboats and railroad cars. It also includes collective dwellings such as nursing homes, hospitals, lodging or rooming houses, hotels, group homes, and so on.

Proportion of seniors living in special care facilities increases with age

As people age, they are more likely to live in collective dwellings that provide ongoing support and assistance services, professional health monitoring, care and treatment.

In 2011, 352,205 seniors aged 65 and over, or 7.1% of all seniors, lived in a collective dwelling that focussed on special care to seniors (see Box 2). The prevalence of seniors living in special care facilities, such as nursing homes, chronic care and long-term care hospitals and residences for senior citizens, increased with age (Figure 4). Among the age group 65 to 69, about 1% lived in special care facilities in 2011; among seniors aged 85 and over, the proportion was 29.6%.

Figure 4 Percentage of the population aged 65 and over living in special care facilities[1] by age group, Canada, 2011



Note:
1. Refers to nursing homes, chronic care or long-term care hospitals and residences for senior citizens.
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2011.

The proportion for seniors living in special care facilities was similar among women and men aged 65 to 74. However, past the age of 75, the prevalence of living in this type of collective dwellings increased considerably for both sexes, but at a different pace. Among women aged 85 and over, the share in special care facilities was 33.4%, higher than the share of 21.5% for men.

Living alone: The most common arrangement in residences for senior citizens[5]

The census counted 127,925 seniors, 2.6% of the population aged 65 and over, living in residences for senior citizens. About 72.3% of them were women and 27.7% men.

The majority of persons aged 65 and over (83.9%) in residences for senior citizens were living alone (Table 1). In the age group 65 to 74, the proportions for men and women living alone in a residence for senior citizens were similar (82.5% for women and 81.3% for men).

Table 1 Distribution (in percentage) of living arrangements of the population aged 65 and over living in residences for senior citizens, by age group and sex, Canada, 2011

Age group	Sex	Living alone	Living in a couple[1]	Living with others[2]
			percentage	
65 years and over	Total	83.9	15.0	1.1
	Men	71.8	27.3	0.9
	Women	88.6	10.3	1.1
65 to 74 years	Total	82.1	16.3	1.7
	Men	81.3	17.2	1.5
	Women	82.5	15.7	1.7
75 to 84 years	Total	80.5	18.4	1.1
	Men	69.7	29.2	1.1
	Women	84.9	14.0	1.1
85 years and over	Total	86.9	12.2	0.9
	Men	70.6	28.8	0.6
	Women	92.2	6.7	1.0

Notes:
1. Includes married spouse or common-law partner.
2. Includes living with adult children, with relatives or non-relatives. No married spouse or common-law partner of the person is present.

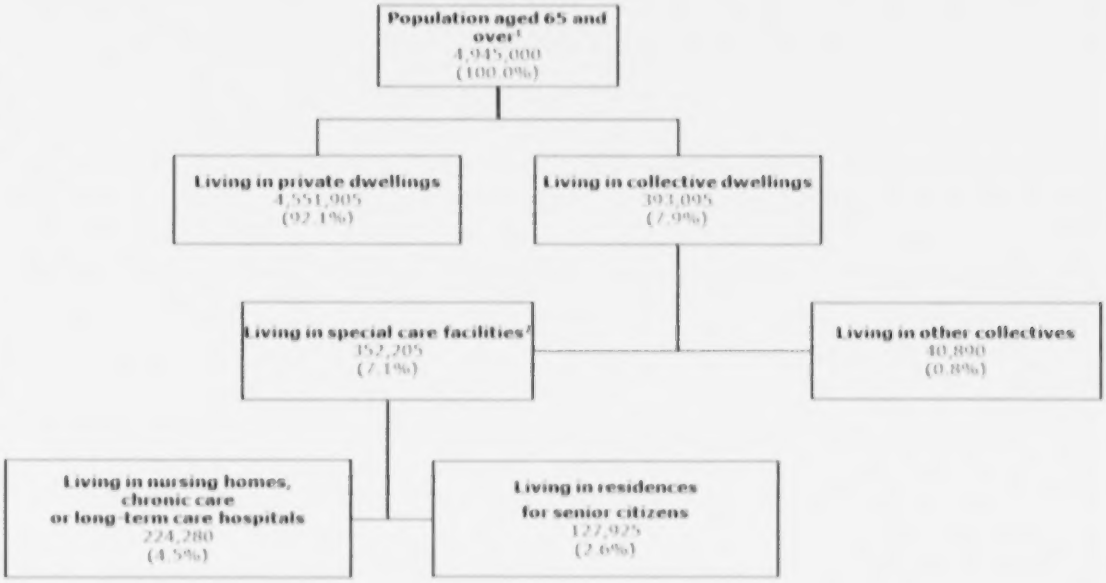
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2011.

Among the age group 85 and over, 86.9% of seniors in residences for senior citizens were living alone. The share of women in this age group living alone (92.2%) was higher than for men (70.6%).

In contrast, the share of seniors living in residences for senior citizens as a couple was higher for men. In 2011, 17.2% of men aged 65 to 74 lived in a couple, compared with 15.7% for women. In the oldest age group, 85 and over, this proportion was 28.8% for men and 6.7% for women.

5. Residences for senior citizens refer to collective dwellings that provide support services (such as meals, housekeeping, medication supervision, assistance in bathing) and supervision for elderly residents who are independent in most activities of daily living.

Box 2 Adding up the senior population



1. Includes all individuals living in private or collective dwellings in Canada. Persons outside Canada on government, military or diplomatic postings are not included.
2. Nursing homes, chronic care, long-term care hospitals and residences for senior citizens.

Box 3 Note to readers regarding seniors living in collectives

At the time of census enumeration, it can be difficult to differentiate between types of collective dwellings which focus primarily on seniors, such as nursing homes, residences for senior citizens or chronic and long-term care hospitals.

It is also important to note that in the Census of Population, some collective dwellings are classified by the types and levels of services offered, rather than by their names or official status from a business perspective.

For these reasons, users should be cautioned when comparing the census collective dwelling types with classifications used in other data sources.

Note to readers

Random rounding and percentage distributions: To ensure the confidentiality of responses collected for the 2011 Census while maintaining the quality of the results, a random rounding process is used to alter the values reported in individual cells. As a result, when these data are summed or grouped, the total value may not match the sum of the individual values, since the total and subtotals are independently rounded. Similarly, percentage distributions, which are calculated on rounded data, may not necessarily add up to 100%.

Due to random rounding, counts and percentages may vary slightly between different census products, such as the analytical document, highlight tables, and topic-based tabulations.

Additional information

Additional information on specific geographies can be found in the Highlight tables, Catalogue no. 98-312-X2011002, Topic-based tabulations, Catalogue no. 98-313-X2011024, no. 98-313-X2011025, no. 98-313-X2011027, no. 98-313-X2011028 and no. 98-313-X2011029 as well as in the new census product Focus on Geography Series, Catalogue no. 98-310-X2011004.

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